In the Specification:

The paragraph beginning, page 13, line 20 is amended as follows:

Moisture is typically present under normal operating conditions and is thus made available during the oxygen exposure of the T test samples to react with any reaction products that might be produced during the oxygen exposure. Accordingly, during $0 \leq t \leq \tau$, the T test samples are exposed to moisture having a relative humidity H(t) such that $H_1 \leq H(t) \leq H_2$, wherein $H_1 \geq 0\%$ and $H_2 \leq 100\%$. H(t) may be approximately constant (i.e., H_2 is about equal to H_1) (e.g., H(t) is about equal to 0%, 25%, 50%, 80%, 100%, etc). Alternatively H(t) may be variable in time (i.e., $dH(t)/dt \neq 0$ within $0 \leq t \leq \tau$) with any time dependence (e.g., monotonically increasing, monotonically decreasing, oscillatory, etc.). ~~In an embodiment~~

The paragraph beginning, page 18, line 15 is amended as follows:

Accordingly after the T test samples and the C control samples have been exposed, step **64** analyzes the T oxygen-exposed test samples and the C inert gas-exposed control samples. The analysis of step **64** includes: measuring at least one characteristic common to the C control samples and the T test samples; and determining whether there exists at least one significant difference between the at least one characteristic of the T test samples and the at least one characteristic of the C control samples. If T>1 and/or C>1, which may be equivalently expressed as N>2, determining whether there exists said at least one significant difference may comprises performing a statistical analysis of the at least one characteristic of the C control samples and/or the T test samples. Step **65** is a decision block which determines the next action based on whether said at least one significant difference has been determined to exist. If at least one significant difference is determined not to exist then the process ends. If[[-]] at least one

significant difference [[not]] is determined to exist then step [[**65**]] **66** is next executed, followed by ending the process. Step [[**65**]] **66** performs further testing, analysis, or testing and analysis of the semiconductor packaging material to more definitively assess the likelihood of the semiconductor packaging material being unstable in a prolonged exposure to oxygen. Thus, the method described by the flow chart of FIG. 3 may serve as a screening process to screen out those semiconductor packaging materials which are candidates for being unstable when subjected to continuous, prolonged exposure to oxygen under normal operating conditions.